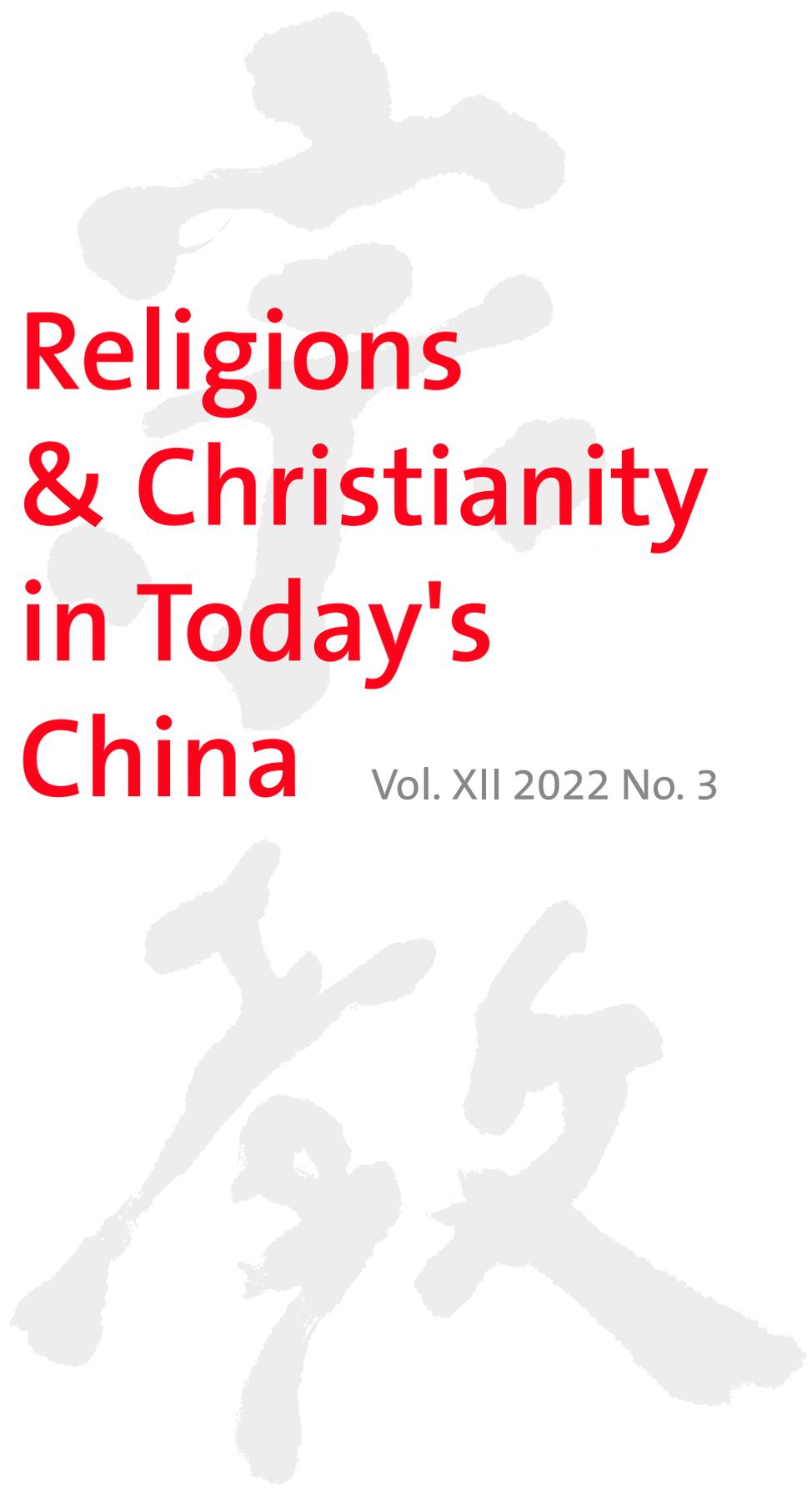


中國宗教評論



Religions  
& Christianity  
in Today's  
China

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## Editorial

Dear Readers,

Today we can present to you the August 2022 issue of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* (中国宗教评论) which is the third issue this year.

We continue with the regular series of News Updates on recent events and general trends with regard to religions and especially Christianity in today's China.

Prof. Dr. Leo Leeb, Renmin University of China in Beijing, in his article “Lu Bohong, the ‘Forgotten Saint’ of Shanghai” vividly portrays and resurrects the Catholic entrepreneur and active “apostle of charity.” Alongside Ma Xiangbo (1840–1939), Joseph Lu Bohong (1875–1937) was probably the best known Chinese Catholic of his times, but due to the war and subsequent developments he sank into oblivion.

The issue closes with a book review by Michael Kropp, Misereor in Germany, of Chan Shun-hing – Jonathan W. Johnson, *Citizens of Two Kingdoms. Civil Society and Christian Religion in Greater China*.

*Religions & Christianity in Today's China* is freely available on the website of the China-Zentrum, [www.china-zentrum.de](http://www.china-zentrum.de). Additionally, readers who subscribe to *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* will regularly receive e-mail updates providing web links to the contents of each newly published issue. – The China-Zentrum is a non-profit organization. For the publication of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* we are dependent on the generosity of our friends and readers. In order to help us cover inevitable costs, we would be very grateful if you could consider sending a voluntary contribution.

*Sankt Augustin, August 2022*

*The Editors*

## News Update on Religion and Church in China March 30 – July 5, 2022

Compiled by Katharina Feith, Isabel Friemann (China InfoStelle) and Katharina Wenzel-Teuber, with a contribution by Michael Kropp  
Translated by David Streit SVD

*The “News Update on Religion and Church in China” appears regularly in each issue of Religions & Christianity in Today’s China (RCTC). Since the editorial staff learns of some items only later, it can happen that there are chronological overlaps between “News Updates” of two consecutive issues of RCTC. In these cases stories referred to in earlier “News Updates” will not be repeated. All “News Updates” can be found online at the website of the China-Zentrum ([www.china-zentrum.de](http://www.china-zentrum.de)). – The last “News Update” (RCTC 2022, No. 2, pp. 3-17) covered the period November 13, 2021 – March 27, 2022.*

### Varia

May 7, 2022:

#### Chinese universities withdraw from international rankings

As reported by Chinese state media – according to *BBC Monitoring* on May 7, 2022 – Renmin University of China, Nanjing University and Lanzhou University have decided to withdraw from international university rankings. According to the *BBC* report, Chinese media largely supports the pullback, arguing that China should set its own assessment standards based on “Chinese characteristics.” Media and education experts in China, thus *BBC*, support the pull out, the abolition of foreign ranking standards would mean a “return of China’s educational sovereignty.” The report also cites the *South China Morning Post*, which reported that Renmin University in 2020 set up its own center to evaluate higher education in China, which “aims to evaluate higher education with Chinese characteristics and an international perspective.” On May 16, Beijing-affiliated Hong Kong news website *HK01* pointed out that the news of Chinese universities dropping from international rankings comes amid widespread speculation about China’s isolation from the world. However, the article concludes that “the door of China’s reform and opening-up has been opened, and it is impossible to close it easily,” *BBC* quotes *HK01*. kf

### Religious Policy

April 2022:

#### First religious entities acquire an “Internet Religious Information Services License”

So far, there have only been a few reports of successfully acquired “Internet Religious Information Services License.” Among the first was the Xin’en Church in the City of Yiwu (Zhejiang), which acquired the

license on April 18. The licenses are issued by the provinces. In Guangdong Province, “Guangdong Catholicism” (Guangdong tianzhujiao), that is, the two official Catholic governing bodies of Guangdong Province – the Patriotic Association and the Commission for Church Affairs – was the first successful religious entity, it received the license on April 28, followed by the Protestant Guangdong Union Theological Seminary, which received its license on April 29. On the website of the seminary, [gduts.org](http://gduts.org), the new license with the license number is given in the imprint at the bottom of the web-page.

Meanwhile, courses and exams for prospective “religious information verification personnel” continue – the organization applying for a license must prove that it has such qualified verifiers. According to *China Christian Daily* (CCD, June 28), the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission of Guangdong Province released the names of 127 people who passed the exam for religious information verification personnel. According to the CCD, the religious authority in Shanghai announced on June 23 that the exams would be held in stages in different groups and times depending on the corona situation ([ccctspm.org](http://ccctspm.org) May 9; [chinachristiandaily.com](http://chinachristiandaily.com) June 28, 29; [gospeltimes.cn](http://gospeltimes.cn) [not accessible at editorial deadline]; [xinde.org](http://xinde.org) May 11).

The “Measures for the Administration of Internet Religious Information Services,” which came into force on March 1, 2022, provide for the acquisition of a license for the offering of such information services and for this, in turn, the existence of qualified information verification personnel must be proven. For a German translation of the “Measures,” see *China heute* 2022, No. 2, pp. 91-97 and [www.china-zentrum.de/dokumente-zu-religion-und-politik](http://www.china-zentrum.de/dokumente-zu-religion-und-politik). An English translation can be found at <https://bitterwinter.org/crackdown-on-religious-content-coming-march-2022>. For more background information, see *China heute* 2022, No. 1, pp. 4-5, and No. 2, pp. 74-76 (in German). *kwt*

June 1, 2022:

## “Measures for the Administration of Financial Affairs of Sites for Religious Activities” take effect

The new administrative law standard was promulgated by the National Religious Affairs Administration (NRAA) and the Ministry of Finance on February 11, 2022, but was not announced to the public until April 8. It applies to Buddhist and Daoist temples and monasteries, mosques, churches and other fixed venues for religious activities (Article 2) and replaces the previously applicable “Measures for the Supervision and Administration of Financial Affairs of Sites for Religious Activities (For Trial Implementation),” which was promulgated by the NRAA in 2010, at the time without the Ministry of Finance. At 55 paragraphs, the new “Measures” are slightly longer than the 2010 “Measures” which had 40 paragraphs. A new chapter, “Structure and personnel of the financial administration,” has been added. Otherwise, the division has been retained, namely in the chapters “General provisions,” “Administration of bookkeeping and accounting,” “Administration of the budget,” “Administration of income,” “Administration of expenditure,” “Asset administration,” “Supervisory administration, and “Legal responsibility.”

The text of the new “Measures for the Administration of Financial Affairs of Sites for Religious Activities” (宗教活动场所财务管理办法) can be found at [www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2022/content\\_5696255.htm](http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2022/content_5696255.htm), a German translation of the 2010 “Measures” can be found in *China heute* 2012, No. 4, pp. 222-226 and at [www.china-zentrum.de/dokumente-zu-religion-und-politik](http://www.china-zentrum.de/dokumente-zu-religion-und-politik). *kwt*

June 7, 2022:

## State Council announces the appointment of Cui Maohu as Director of National Religious Affairs Administration (NRAA)

Cui Maohu 崔茂虎 replaces the previous director, Wang Zuo'an 王作安, in this function. Cui has also simultaneously taken over Wang's post as one of the vice chairmen of the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department.

Why Cui Maohu was chosen for this post is unclear. In his previous career, he was not responsible for religious affairs. Cui was born in Yunnan in 1965. He has a degree in philosophy from Yunnan University. In 1990 he joined the Chinese Communist Party. He has held various party and government positions in Yunnan, most recently as vice governor of Yunnan Province (from May 2021) and secretary-general of the CCP Yunnan Provincial Committee (from November 2021).

Wang Zuo'an has worked in the NRAA since 1987 and took over its leadership in 2009. Overall, during his tenure as director – especially after Xi Jinping took office in 2013 – there was a strong tightening of party-state religious policy, including through a series of religious-political administrative laws. In 2018, the NRAA was incorporated into the CCP's United Front Department, and Wang became one of the vice-chairmen of the United Front Department (*South China Morning Post* June 9; *Xinhua* June 7). For the change in leadership of the NRAA, see also *China heute* 2022, No. 2, pp. 72-73 (in German). *kwf*

June 8, 2022:

## Joint Conference of National Religious Organizations passes appeal for frugality and renunciation of extravagance – Cui Maohu's first appearance as NRAA director

At this online meeting, Cui delivered a speech to the assembled leaders of the official governing bodies of the five religions. The religious representatives passed a "Joint Appeal to Promote Frugality and Refrain from Extravagance" (关于崇俭戒奢的共同倡议). The appeal complains that greed, striving for riches, and extravagance in the religious field have spoiled the religious style, damaged the reputation of the religions and hindered their Sinicization. It calls for a frugal lifestyle and ecological behavior. Traditional wisdom and scriptures of the religions are quoted as proof that thrift is a traditional Chinese virtue that is necessary for the implementation of the socialist core values but also a moral standard that is common to all religions. In the weeks that followed, official bodies of the religions at all levels had to study the appeal ([www.zyztb.gov.cn/tzyw/372063.jhtml](http://www.zyztb.gov.cn/tzyw/372063.jhtml) – seen on June 10, not available at the time of going to press). *kwf*

July 1, 2022:

## Official "religious circles" mark 101 years of Chinese Communist Party

After the religions had to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Party on a grand scale last year (see *China heute* 2021, No. 2, pp. 72-73 [in German] and *RCTC* 2021, No. 3, pp. 5-6), there were reports of similar ceremonies from individual locations this year as well – on each of the five recognized religions' (excluding Islam) official bodies' websites there was one report to be found. A report on the Chinese Daoist Association's website shows 21 photos of the raising of the national flag to celebrate 101 years of

the Party in various Daoist sites in Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Guizhou and Hunan Provinces. In some cases – for example at the flag ceremony of the Xishuangbanna Buddhist Association (Yunnan Province) on July 1st – 25 years of Hong Kong’s “return” to the Motherland were also celebrated. On the same day, Protestant churches in all districts of the City of Hohhot in Inner Mongolia held flag-raising ceremonies to celebrate the Party’s birthday and welcome the 20th party congress (at which Xi Jinping’s re-election as general secretary is on the agenda in October).

A cultural program with patriotic songs celebrating the Party’s birthday was held at the Catholic Cathedral of Leshan (Sichuan Province) on June 29 – the Feast of Peter and Paul. Bishop Lei Shiyin of Leshan, one of the seven previously illegitimate bishops recognized by the Pope in 2018, sang “I and my Fatherland” with priests and sisters. On the same day, Bishop Lei ordained two deacons as priests. The group photo after the consecration shows the church holding four banners, one bearing the motto “Listen to the Party, feel the goodness of the Party, go with the Party” (ccctspm.org July 6; chinabudhism.com.cn July 2; www.chinacatholic.cn/html/report/22070262-1.htm August 7 [with group photo showing church with banners]; taoist.org.cn July 4). *kwt*

## Religions in General

Spring 2022:

### Corona infection waves and lockdowns – continued closure of religious sites and relief efforts by religions



Sisters delivering vegetable orders during the Tangshan-lockdown. Photo: xinde.org.

On April 18, 2022, the news portal *Caixin* reported that at least 22 cities with almost 30 million people were still in lockdown. According to the *China Table*, at times even a third of the Chinese were affected by curfews. The strict curfews often lasted for many weeks, in Shanghai, for example, from March 28 to early June. There are reports of organizations, communities and believers from the five recognized religions supporting the authorities in the “fight” against the virus – very often by donating relief supplies or by volunteering. In the affected areas, religious sites had to be closed and religious activities suspended. According to a June 6 post in *China Christian Daily*, official Protestant churches in some areas have often closed more days than they were open since the beginning of 2020 due to the pandemic. For example, a church in Heilongjiang was only open normally for 157 of the last 828 days.

For more details, see *China heute* 2022, No. 2, pp. 76-77 and pp. 112-114 (Pastor Annette Mehlhorn on her nine years with the German-speaking Christian

Community of Shanghai), both in German. For Buddhist monasteries in distress due to lockdowns, see the entry from around June 1, 2022, in the section “Buddhism.” *kwt*

## Daoism

March 30, 2022:

### Chinese Daoist Association (CDA) releases 2021 work report and 2022 plans from its January 26 board meeting

CDA chairman Li Guangfu presented the 2021 work report on January 26. Here are just a few of the details: The section on “self-building” of the CDA included regulations on official vehicles, annual appraisal and remuneration of staff, and regulations for retired Daoist clergy. A “general Party branch of the CDA” (协会党总支) and its activities are mentioned.

In the “religious affairs” section there was an emphasis on the strengthening of the administration of the Daoist religious personnel. The construction of a corresponding database was pushed ahead, the entry of the data of the “over 30,000 currently existing” Daoist religious personnel was basically completed. The dates of 674 Daoist religious priests were verified in 2021, 525 certificates for Daoist religious personnel were issued, as well as 1,500 *chuandu* 传度 and 200 *guanjin* 冠巾 certificates (i.e. certificates of first ordinations of Zhengyi and Quanzhen Daoists, respectively). Possession of a *guanjin* or *chuandu* certificate is, according to the currently valid regulations of the CDA, the presupposition for recognition as a Daoist religious cleric.

The section “protection of the rights and interests of Daoism” is interesting: This included the protection of Daoist intellectual property, for example in film and television (the CDA made a submission to this point to the Political Consultative Conference of the Chinese People), trademark protection as well as action against the denigration of Daoism through individual mobile phone games. In its section on “Sinicization of Daoism,” the work report referred to the third training course on this topic, which was carried out jointly with the Central Institute for Socialism, and to numerous local actions, e.g. a scripture interpretation event organized by the Daoist Association of Hunan on the topic “The Heart Faithfully Devoted to the Party – Sinicization of Daoism.” A plan for Daoist education 2022–2025 has been approved (see next entry). In the section “Daoist charity” it is listed, among other things, that RMB 1.1 million was allocated for the maintenance of financially weak monasteries and almost half a million RMB was used to finance the pensions of 143 needy elderly Daoist priests.

Of the CDA’s plans for 2022, it is worth mentioning the preparation of the 5th International Daoist Forum and the groundwork for the establishment of a World Association of Daoism (which has been planned for some time) ([www.taoist.org.cn/showInfoContent.do?id=7820&p=%27p%27](http://www.taoist.org.cn/showInfoContent.do?id=7820&p=%27p%27)).

For the *chuandu* and *guanjin* certificates, see K. Wenzel-Teuber, “Statistics on Religions and Churches,” in: *RCTC* 2022, No. 2, pp. 18-42, here pp. 21-22. *kwf*

March 31, 2022:

### Chinese Daoist Association (CDA) releases 2022–2025 education plan from its January 26 board meeting

On January 26 of this year, the board of the CDA approved an educational framework of Chinese Daoism for the years 2022 to 2025 (中国道教教育规划纲要 [2022-2025年]). Measures are planned in various areas. First and foremost is the raising of ideological consciousness. Guided by the Xi Jinping ideas for a socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new age, the political and ideological education should continue to “penetrate into minds and hearts.” Party building (!) and political and ideological work [at the Daoist training centers] should be pushed forward from “soft guidelines” to “hard reining.” Another goal is to streamline the training system and increase funding – including through application-oriented, specialized talent training and efforts to attract more government fund-

ing. The curricula are to be optimized, including using the curricula of general universities and modern educational concepts. A series of “brand courses” (品牌课程) are to be created for the professional teaching of Daoism. Institutes for Daoist education are encouraged to form teaching and learning communities, coordinate curricula and allocate resources rationally. In order to increase the teaching capacity, among other things, the establishment of a department for Daoism teacher training and the recruitment of highly qualified lecturers from society who are well versed in Daoism and have teaching experience are proposed. In addition, Daoist religious personnel who work full-time as lecturers should be encouraged to obtain degrees from general colleges ([www.taoist.org.cn/showInfoContent.do?id=7822&p=%27p%27](http://www.taoist.org.cn/showInfoContent.do?id=7822&p=%27p%27)). *kwt*

## Buddhism

April 20, 2022:

### International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) reports on the background to the destruction of three giant Buddha statues in Draggo County

According to the ICT, first the school of the Gaden Namgyal Ling monastery in Draggo (Chinese: Luhuo) County, which belongs to the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province, was destroyed on October 31, 2021, by order of the authorities. Starting December 12, a 99-foot (about 30-meter) tall Buddha statue was demolished, then a 45-foot tall statue of Guru Padmasambhava, and starting December 21, a three-story (about 40-foot tall) statue of Buddha Maitreya. Many Tibetans protesting against the demolitions have been arrested, ICT said. The organization gave the names of 11 Tibetans – including four monks and one nun – who were detained for a variety of reasons ranging from reporting the destruction to the outside world to using photos of the statues as their social media profile pictures. Two of those arrested have since been released. According to ICT, earthquakes are common in Draggo County; the local population donated for the construction of the statues in the religious belief that they will help avert natural disasters.

According to ICT, the demolitions began shortly after Wang Dongsheng, a Tibetan cadre, was appointed party secretary of Draggo County on October 13, 2021. He is said to have previously overseen the demolition of large parts of the Larung Gar Buddhist Academy as deputy party secretary of Serthar County. ICT ties the demolitions of the Buddha statues to Wang’s apparent efforts (as revealed in Draggo County’s 2021 Annual Report) to implement the central leadership’s “law-based governance” strategy. ICT counters that the destroyed statues were built in 2015 with the permission of the local authorities, which was still allowed under the 2005 “Regulations on Religious Affairs” in force at the time. Only the revised “Regulations for Religious Affairs,” which came into force in 2018, prohibit the “construction of large outdoor religious statues outside [the grounds] of temples or churches” (Article 30) ([savetibet.org](http://savetibet.org) April 20). *kwt*

Around June 1, 2022:

### Donglin Monastery on Lushan Mountain in Jiangxi is distributing 500,000 pounds of food to monasteries in distress due to the pandemic in 22 provinces

The project “Nourishing the sangha in small monasteries” started on May 27 with an announcement from Donglin Monastery. In the following, according to a report on the monastery’s public WeChat

account, the project team was inundated with applications and learned that the situation at some monasteries is even more difficult than expected. In just a few days, the first batch of food aid – 41,550 (Chinese) pounds of rice, 971 barrels of cooking oil and dried vegetables – was distributed to 248 needy monasteries with a total of 1,100 monks and nuns. The project is to be continued. Where the funds for the project come from is not stated, but the announcement mentions donations from the public.

As to the background of the project, the announcement says: “The pandemic is now in its third year. In order to prevent and protect the life and health of believers, religious sites everywhere have again and again been placed under ‘double suspension,’ with temples and monasteries closed for long periods without any income. A few small monasteries in remote, sparsely populated places that are difficult to access in terms of transport, which are already economically disadvantaged and live in hardship, have not yet been able to fully restore their incense sales. Today, when the supply is really difficult and food is scarce, the monks and nuns have to struggle to make ends meet, in some of the small monasteries the state of emergency has broken out again [...]”

The project is not the first such action of the monastery. Donglin Monastery has been organizing “Help for monasteries in need” since May 2020, i.e. soon after the outbreak of the pandemic. According to another report, from the start of the campaign two years ago to May 27 this year, Donglin Monastery has sent aid to 1,850 needy monasteries, provided medical aid to 74 needy critically ill monks and nuns, and donated a total of RMB 54,276,000 for aid (WeChat account jxldsonglinsi May 27; June 01 – <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/JT-XX-dvww3R9DLORTW6IA>; <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/eqGUYryrL-HDbRRZNk41cLg>). *kwf*

June 27, 2022:

## ***Sixth Tone* reports on the precarious residency status of monks from Myanmar and Laos in Yunnan**

Yunnan is the only province in China where Theravada Buddhism is widespread. A report by anthropologist Ma Zhen on *Sixth Tone*, a portal of the state-funded Shanghai United Media Group, speaks of a shortage of trained monks in the southwestern region. In Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, according to a 2018 field study by Ma, 296 of the 589 Buddhist temples had resident monks from Myanmar and Laos, and 100 temples had no resident monk at all. However, these – in many cases apparently well-trained – “migrant monks” have had problems with their residence status in recent years due to China’s stricter border control regulations, Ma writes. She says that since the end of 2018, Chinese authorities demanded that the monks from Myanmar and Laos show their ordination certificate, passport, ID card and numerous other legal documents, otherwise they would be repatriated. In other places in Yunnan, according to Ma, the shortage of monks is even more serious: In 2010, 86% of the temples in the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, 40% of the temples in Lincang City and 25% of the temples in Pu’er City had no resident monks ([sixthtone.com](http://sixthtone.com) June 27). *kwf*

## **Islam**

March 31, 2022:

## **Qinghai Islamic Association announces issuance of new version of ID card for Islamic religious personnel**

A first group of 2,618 Islamic clerics from Qinghai province have already received the new certificate. It contains a counterfeit-proof QR code logo that can be scanned with WeChat to display the Islamic

religious clergy's personal details, photos and other information. Before the new certificates were issued, the data of the persons concerned were "verified in stages," first by the Islamic Association of the county, then by the city or district and finally by the province. The new ID cards are intended to improve the administration of the Muslim clergy – said the report on the website of the Chinese Islamic Association ([chinaislam.net.cn](http://chinaislam.net.cn) March 31). *kwt*

May 16, 2022:

## Chinese Islamic Association (CIA) cancels the Hajj once again for 2022

Although Saudi Arabia allowed foreign pilgrims into the country for the Hajj 2022 (July 7–12) for the first time since the beginning of the corona pandemic, the CIA has canceled the pilgrimage again. Its "Notice of the Suspension of the 2022 Hajj" said China has made great strategic gains in fighting the pandemic, but it is virulent around the world. At the holy sites in Saudi Arabia, there is a high risk of infection with the corona virus due to the large number of pilgrims in a small space. There has been a recent surge of outbreaks in China, it said, and prevention measures are still strict, so people's health is being put first and Hajj is being suspended ([sxyslj.com](http://sxyslj.com) May 16).

The CIA is the only Chinese government-approved organizer of pilgrimages to Mecca by PRC citizens. For the new 2020 government regulations for the Hajj of Chinese Muslims, see *China heute* 2020, No. 4, pp. 186-188 (in German). *kwt*

May 24, 2022:

## Largest data leak to date on detention centers in Xinjiang also includes police photos of 330 persons imprisoned because of religion

The so-called "Xinjiang Police Files" – a large body of tens of thousands of files containing confidential or internal data from the Xinjiang Autonomous Region police network, including photos from re-education camps, internal speeches and instructions, from the 2,000s to the end of 2018 – were leaked to Xinjiang researcher Adrian Zenz by a hacker. A consortium of 14 international media, including *Bayrischer Rundfunk* and the magazine *Der Spiegel*, presented them to the public on May 24 (see [dw.com](http://dw.com) May 24). According to Zenz's description of the files, they also contain a spreadsheet titled "persons subjected to strike hard because of religion." According to Zenz, it lists 330 people with photos who were convicted of illegal religious activities such as studying the Qur'an. For his description and analysis of the data, see Adrian Zenz, "The Xinjiang Police Files: Re-Education Camp Security and Political Paranoia in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," in: *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies* 2022, No. 3, pp. 1–56 (Online First), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25365/jeacs.2022.3.zenz>, here p. 33. *kwt*

## Protestant Churches

April 12, 2022:

## Chinese Christians open their first theological seminary in Italy

According to a report by the Italian Evangelical Alliance on April 25, the Italian Chinese Theological Seminary was opened in Rome by a group of 55 churches. It will train pastors for Chinese speaking

congregations in Italy and other European countries. The seminary was inaugurated on April 12. About 300 people attended the inauguration, including many representatives of Chinese churches in Italy and some from other European countries, as well as about 30 Italian guests. The new facility will operate from a renovated hotel acquired by the Chinese Christian Church in Italy, a grouping of 55 Chinese churches. The building is located within the area of the Tor Vergata University. According to the Institute's website (itcts.org, in Chinese only), the degrees of Bachelor of Theology and Master of Divinity will be awarded. The website explains why the seminary was set up as follows: "In addition to Italy, Chinese churches [...] are also widespread in Spain, France and many other countries in Europe. Many of its leaders have recognized that the church model that has worked so well in the past is becoming increasingly unsustainable in a pluralistic world. It is not enough for believers to simply attend meetings and hear sermons; they need systematic biblical teaching and holistic pastoral care for their lives. The complexity of family and youth issues calls for specialized and professional evangelism and ministry" (evangelicalfocus.com April 25; seminar website at itcts.org). *kf*

**May 10, 2022:**

## Measures taken against largest house church in Xiamen, Fujian Province – preacher and his wife summoned to appear in court

With a history of over 100 years, the Xunsiding Church (巡司頂教會) in Xiamen is one of the traditional house churches. It is the largest house church in the city. Preacher Yang Xibo 楊希伯 is the fourth generation to lead the church. His father and aunt were previously sentenced to long prison terms of 5 and 15 years, respectively, for opposing the church's joining the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. On May 19, 2019, the church was banned. Police guarded the site at 5 Xunsiding Street for 30 days to prevent any further activity. A fine of 25,000 RMB was imposed. Meetings, services and gatherings in small groups continued to take place in different places: in private homes, under the Yanwu Bridge by the sea or in hotels. The authorities repeatedly disrupted and terminated the meetings. House searches and confiscation of religious materials also took place. On July 29, 2021, the Siming District People's Court in Xiamen fined Yang Xibo and his wife Wang Xiaofei 王晓飞 100,000 RMB each for organizing illegal gatherings. The couple's appeal was denied on November 25, 2021, on the grounds that both continued to participate in illegal religious activities and engaged in organizational behavior. Yang and Wang were called to the court for another hearing in the case on May 10, 2022 (UCAN May 3; <https://ipkmedia.com/137215/>).

*Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle*

**June 2022:**

## Graduation ceremonies at theological seminaries

In June, theological seminaries in the People's Republic of China held graduation ceremonies for theological graduates of various degrees. A total of 162 people graduated from the national Nanjing Theological Seminary this year: 137 received their four-year undergraduate bachelor's degrees, and 25 had studied for three more years and earned a master's degree. Although much of the class was conducted online after the New Year's break, the June 20 graduation ceremony was conducted at the seminary church on campus. Greetings from the former President of the Chinese Christian Council (CCC), Pastor Dr. Gao Feng, Acting President of the CCC Pastor Wu Wei, and Three-Self Patriotic Movement Chairman Elder Xu Xiaohong were broadcast online on a big screen from Shanghai. Yanjing Theological Seminary in Beijing celebrated the graduation of 16 undergraduate theology students on June 12. In



Graduation ceremony at Yanjing Theological Seminary in Beijing, 2022. Photo: ccctspm.org.

the number of students. It hopes to soon be upgraded to the rank of theological seminary by the religious authority and get approval to offer a three-year undergraduate degree in theology (ccctspm.org June 14; gxcctspm.cn June 14).

*Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle*

some places in China, teaching and campus life have not been affected by the pandemic this year. For example at the Bible School of Guangxi Province in Nanning. On June 11, the graduations in three possible courses were celebrated there: for the 8th time in the basic course in theology (two years of training), for the 26th time in knowledge of the Bible (one year of training) and for the 10th time in church music (one year of training). The Bible School has succeeded in improving the academic quality of the training and increasing

## Catholic Church

April 29, 2022:

### Four underground priests of Baoding Diocese disappear – According to *AsiaNews*, a total of 10 Baoding priests have disappeared since January

Four priests, Fr. Yang Jianwei 杨建伟, Fr. Zhang Chunguang 张春光, Fr. Zhang Zhenquan 张振全 and Fr. Yin Shuangxi 尹双喜, disappeared on the afternoon of April 29 in Xushui, Baoding City. Missing person reports and a search call issued by relatives circulated on social networks. According to a post by Wang Zhicheng in *AsiaNews*, Fr. Zhang Shouxin 张守欣 also disappeared in Baoding on April 30. In addition, Wang named five other Baoding underground priests who were abducted by the authorities between January and April 2022, namely, Frs. Chen Hechao 陈合超, Ji Fuhou 姬福厚, Ma Ligang 马里刚, Yang Guanglin 杨广林 and Shang Mancang 商满仓. According to Wang Zhicheng, the priests are subjected to *guanzhi* 管制 (literally “control”), which is not physical prison but restrictions of movement and forced participation in political training with the aim of coercing them to join the official Church. Wang recalls that the bishop of Baoding’s underground community, Bishop Su Zhimin 苏志民, has been in the hands of the police since 1997 and Fr. Liu Honggeng 刘红更 has been imprisoned for seven years. The unofficial community of Baoding has been divided since Bishop Su Zhimin’s former auxiliary bishop, An Shuxin 安树新, decided to work publicly after his release in 2006 from ten years in prison and was officially installed as the bishop of Baoding in 2010 (*AsiaNews* May 3; *UCAN* August 9, 2010). *kwf*

May 10, 2022:

## Bishop Peter Wu Junwei of Xinjiang, Shanxi Province, has died



Bishop Peter Wu Junwei. On the right: Bishop Wu visits a food stand run by volunteers from the Diocese of Xinjiang for evacuees of the October 2021 floods. Photos: xinde.org.

Bishop Peter Wu Junwei 武俊维 is reported to have died unexpectedly at the age of 58 as a result of a heart attack. Since 2009 he has presided over the Xinjiang/Yuncheng Diocese in southern Shanxi Province. Bishop Wu was born on June 27, 1963. In 1985 he entered the Taiyuan Seminary and was ordained a priest on December 9, 1990. Initially active as parish priest, from 1996 to 2001 he was diocesan director for ecclesiastical affairs and head of the propaedeutic seminary of the diocese of Taiyuan. From 2001 to 2009 he was the rector of the Shanxi Major Seminary in Taiyuan. On September 21, 2010, with the approval of

Pope Benedict XVI and the Chinese authorities he was consecrated Bishop of Xinjiang/Yuncheng. One of Bishop Wu's central concerns was the social work of the Church, especially helping needy, elderly people. The concerns and needs of the rural population were also particularly close to his heart. But Bishop Wu was also concerned about the future of the Church: it was important to him to communicate the contents of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* and the encyclical *Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis in his diocese, also to show the bond between his believers and Rome and the universal Church (see also Michael Kropp, "Per caritatem servite' – Zum Tode von Bischof Wu Junwei (1963–2022)" in *China heute* 2022, Nr. 2, S. 80-81).

Michael Kropp

May 10, 2022:

## AsiaNews: Bishop Shao Zhumin of Wenzhou spotted in Beijing – Underground Bishops Zhang Weizhu and Cui Tai remain in custody

Catholic sources told *AsiaNews* in May that Wenzhou (Zhejiang) Bishop Shao Zhumin 邵祝民 was spotted in Beijing. They said that he recently had an operation and is currently in a nursing home where he is monitored day and night by police officers. Bishop Shao Zhumin is not recognized as bishop by the government and has been arrested and kidnapped several times, most recently on October 25, 2021; he was released again in November (see *RCTC* 2017, No. 3, pp. 11-12; 2021, No. 4, p. 17; 2022, No. 1, p. 11).

According to *UCAN* on May 24, underground bishop Zhang Weizhu 张维柱 of Xinxiang in Henan Province was still in detention a year after his arrest on May 21, 2021 (see *RCTC* 2021, No. 3, p. 13). *Bitter Winter* said on June 22 that underground Coadjutor Bishop Cui Tai 崔太 of Xuanhua in northern Hebei was still detained. Cui Tai has been repeatedly arrested by the authorities since 2007, most recently in June 2020 (see *RCTC* 2020, No. 4, p. 13) (*AsiaNews* May 10; *Bitter Winter* June 22; *UCAN* May 24). *kwt*

June 13 and 29, 2022:

## Priests ordained in the dioceses of Yuncheng, Fuzhou, Wanzhou and Leshan

In the Xinjiang/Yuncheng Diocese, Shanxi Province, on June 13, Deacon Jia Hongwei was ordained a priest. Archbishop Meng Ningyou of Taiyuan was the ordaining prelate, since the local bishop Wu Junwei had suddenly died shortly before, on May 10 (see entry above). The other new priests – two in Fuzhou, Fujian, one in Wanzhou, Chongqing, and two in Leshan, Sichuan – were ordained by their respective local bishops on June 29. These six priestly ordinations are the first ordinations in 2022 for the Church in mainland China to be reported in Catholic media (*Agenzia Fides* July 1; *xinde.org* June 30; July 8). *kwt*

June 29, 2022:

## 40 people are baptized in Wenzhou Cathedral



Baptism service in Wenzhou on 29 June 2022. The baptised, recognisable by their white clothes, are seated to the left and right of the central aisle of the church. Photo: *xinde.org*

Of the 52 participants in the Cathedral's 21st catechumenate course, forty were baptized and twelve were confirmed in the evening mass on the patronal feast of Saints Peter and Paul. The course began on October 16, 2021 with baptismal classes. This time there were more young people among the baptismal candidates than in previous courses, according to the report on the *Xinde (Faith)* portal. A follow-up course on catechumenate affirmation is now to be organized for the newly baptized (*xinde.org* July 04). *kwt*

## Sino-Vatican Relations

April 11, 2022:

### In an interview, Cardinal Secretary of State Parolin expresses the hope that the agreement can still be adapted successfully

Andrea Gagliarducci of the *Catholic News Agency (CNA)* on April 11 published in summary part 3 of an interview with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who, as head of the Vatican Secretariat of State, is also responsible for negotiations with China. In view of the approaching expiry date [October 22, 2022] of the preliminary Sino-Vatican agreement on bishop appointments, Cardinal Parolin told Gagliarducci: "We are reflecting on what to do. COVID did not help us because it interrupted the ongoing dialogue. We are trying to resume the dialogue concretely, with meetings that we hope will occur soon. We will reflect on the results of the agreement and possibly on the need to make clarifications or review some

points.” Asked if he would like to tweak the deal, Parolin said, “I hope so.” Gagliarducci wrote that Cardinal Parolin did not say which aspects of the agreement – the content of which was never revealed – he hoped to change.

A month later, according to *Vatican News*, Cardinal Parolin said Cardinal Zen’s arrest (on May 11, 2022, see entry in the Hong Kong section) should not be read as a “disavowal” of the agreement; he further said: “The most concrete hope is that initiatives such as this one will not complicate the already complex and not simple path of dialogue between the Holy See and the Church in China.”

Lucia Cheung, who used to head *UCAN*’s Hong Kong China office, explained in a post on her blog about the *CNA*’s interview with Cardinal Parolin that it is the practice of the Holy See to remain silent when negotiations are going well. She reminds us that, on the other hand, in the run-up to the first extension of the agreement in 2020 – which, as was subsequently revealed, was not without problems – a number of important Church representatives spoke out in interviews. She argues that Cardinal Parolin’s remarks in the *CNA* interview may be intended for Beijing’s ears and could be the start of activities from the side of the Vatican to build momentum ahead of the third accord. Cheung also presents the following counter calculations: Of the 6 bishops ordained since September 2018, 3 (Yao Shun, Xu Hongwei and Liu Genzhu) were appointed by the Pope long before the agreement, while, according to Cheung, the 3 others (Cui Qingqi, Li Hui and probably also Chen Tianhao) were elected according to the official Chinese procedure and only then appointed by the Pope – i.e. parity between Rome and Beijing. With the signing of the agreement in September 2018, 8 (one of them posthumously) illegitimate bishops from Rome’s perspective were recognized by the Pope, while since then 6 bishops who were legitimate from Rome’s perspective (illegal from the government’s perspective) have been recognized by the government – giving Beijing a head start of 2 bishops. The Vatican is negotiating with a secular, atheist regime that views episcopal appointments in terms of wins and losses, writes Lucia Cheung. She believes there will be a new “round of the game” between the two sides before the agreement expires in October, because in March, Fr. Wang Yaosheng was unanimously elected bishop candidate in Zhengzhou Diocese in Henan, and according to reports – thus Cheung – Wang is regarded very negatively by the Vatican (*catholicnewsagency.com* April 11; *Vatican News* May 13; *www.luciacheungoffice.medium.com* April 18). *kwt*

July 2, 2022:

## Pope hopes for renewal of the China agreement

In an exclusive 90-minute interview that Pope Francis gave to *Reuters* correspondent Philip Pullella on July 2, he also discussed the Sino-Vatican agreement on the appointment of bishops, which is due for a second extension on October 22, 2022. *Vatican News* also published a summary of some statements. In the interview, Pope Francis defended the policy of small steps, according to *Reuters* he said: “Many people said so many things against John XXIII, against Paul VI, against Casaroli,” but “diplomacy is like that. When you face a blocked situation, you have to find the possible way, not the ideal way, out of it,” Pope Francis said. The Pope went on to say: “Diplomacy is the art of the possible and of doing things to make the possible become a reality.” When it comes to appointing bishops, the Pope sees results: It “is going slowly, but they are being appointed.” In the interview, the Pope also spoke of China’s own challenges: “They also have their own problems,” said Francis, referring to the different attitudes of the local authorities in China, “because it is not the same situation in every region of the country. It (the treatment of Catholics) also depends on local leaders.” In conclusion, the Pope said: “The agreement is moving well and I hope that in October it can be renewed.” In the interview, Pope Francis particularly appreciated the diplomatic skills of Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin: “The one who is handling this agreement is Cardinal Parolin, who is the best diplomat in the Holy See, a man of high diplomatic standing. And he knows how to move, he is a man of dialogue, and he dialogues with the Chinese au-

thorities. I believe that the commission that he chairs has done everything to move forward and look for a way out. And they have found it,” said the Pope (*Vatican News* July 5; *Reuters* July 5). *kf*

## Hong Kong

April 21, 2022:

### Hong Kong priest criticizes Chinese government

In a broadcast by *EWTN*, Hong Kong priest Fr. Vincent Woo publicly asserted that the Chinese Communist Party wants to control all aspects of society, including religious practice. A Protestant pastor was recently detained and charged for posting anti-government comments on his YouTube channel, Fr. Woo mentioned. “As priests and bishops, we are called to be prophets, to speak out against injustice in our society,” he said. “But that example of the Protestant pastor shows priests and bishops in Hong Kong that if you preach something against the government, there will be tremendous consequences, and because of that in the past two years, you rarely see any priest or bishop in Hong Kong that would say anything publicly against the Hong Kong government or the CCP.”

Woo also criticized the policy of Sinicization, according to which anything in Christian doctrine that is not in conformity with socialist teaching will have to be “cast out.” The Party, thus Woo, will likely set its sights on controlling Christian schools in Hong Kong, many teachers have recently left the schools. Father Woo also critiqued many other issues related to Hong Kong and the situation of the Church in China. When asked if he wasn’t worried about what might happen to him now that he is speaking out, Woo said, “I’m the only person in my diocese who is able to do it at the moment.” – Fr. Woo is currently pursuing a PhD in canon law in the USA (*LiCAS / Catholic News Agency* April 27; the interview can be heard at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8DWZIKcQAQ&t=145s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8DWZIKcQAQ&t=145s)). *kf*

May 11, 24, 2022:

### Arrest of Cardinal Zen in Hong Kong and first court date

On May 11, 2022, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kaiun was arrested along with other members of a trust fund supporting democracy activists and released on bail a few hours later. At the first court hearing on May 24, charges of misregistration of the fund were filed. The arrest sparked worldwide outrage and condemnation.

The Diocese of Hong Kong responded with two press statements on May 12 and 24 and a personal Facebook post from Bishop Stephen Chow. According to Bishop Chow, Cardinal Zen wanted his matter to be handled “low profile.” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian, speaking at a regular press conference on May 12, on being asked about Cardinal Zen’s arrest cited Hong Kong’s rule of law and forbade interference in Hong Kong’s affairs. Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin expressed his concern at the arrest on May 13, but at the same time said the event should not be read as “a disavowal” of the Sino-Vatican agreement on the appointment of bishops. On May 14, Cardinal Charles Bo, Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar, and President of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences, issued a critical statement siding with Cardinal Zen, denouncing the increasing loss of civil and political liberties in Hong Kong (*Reuters* May 11; *Ta Kung Po* Jan. 27; *The Standard* May 11; *UCAN* May 11; *Vatican News* May 11, 13; <https://catholic.org.hk/en/media-20220512/>; <https://catholic.org.hk/en/media-20220524/>; [http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/fyrth/202205/t20220512\\_10685185.htm](http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/fyrth/202205/t20220512_10685185.htm); [www.catholicarchdioceseofyangon.com/newview.php?id=175](http://www.catholicarchdioceseofyangon.com/newview.php?id=175); see Statements – in German – in *China heute* 2022, Nr. 2, S. 98-99). *kf*

Beginning of June 2022:

## New version of the history: “Hong Kong wasn’t a British colony”

New Hong Kong textbooks for senior secondary students teach students that the city was occupied territory and not a British colony. The new textbooks were published in early June as part of the revised Liberal Studies course, renamed Citizenship and Social Development, introduced last September. Central to the new curriculum are the themes of national security, identity, patriotism and lawfulness. As the *South China Morning Post* writes, the revised curricula point out that the Chinese government has never recognized the Treaty of Nanking. The treaty was signed after the first Opium War in 1842 and forced the country’s last imperial dynasty to cede the possession of Hong Kong island to the British. The schoolbooks do not refer to Hong Kong as a colony, instead they say that the city was under “colonial administration of Great Britain.”

“Chinese governments succeeding the Qing dynasty have never recognized the unequal treaties and they have never given up sovereignty over Hong Kong. Therefore, Hong Kong is not a colony,” the newspaper quoted from a book. “In the 1960s, the United Nations established the Special Committee on Decolonization to aid colonies in gaining the right to self-determination and independence. To safeguard her sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macau, China demanded the committee to remove Hong Kong and Macau from its list of colonies in 1972.” The textbook states that the resolution was adopted by a majority vote (*South China Morning Post* June 24). *kf*

June 4, 2022:

## Ban on commemorations of the 1989 Tianan’men massacre

For the third year in a row, Hong Kong authorities banned the annual vigil commemorating the victims of the Tianan’men massacre. Reasons were the COVID pandemic and the national security law. The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, which traditionally organized the commemoration in Victoria Park, was dissolved in September last year. For the first time, the Catholic Church canceled memorial services due to concerns about the national security law, even though Holy Masses were held in Catholic churches. According to *AsiaNews*, in a Mass beforehand, Cardinal Joseph Zen mentioned the “brothers and sisters” who sacrificed their lives “for our democracy and our freedom.” A prayer meeting was held at the Ward Memorial Methodist Church in Yau Ma Tei on May 31. Rev. Yuen Tin-yau from the Methodist Church told the *South China Morning Post*, “Praying for the Chinese church and the country is fully justified, how do we violate the national security law just by praying for the country?” The meeting was attended by a few dozen people. Despite warnings, several foreign missions posted pictures and references to 1989 on social media, and the US consulate and EU mission placed lit candles in windows. The Chinese Foreign Ministry later sent a letter to various foreign consulates in Hong Kong, expressing “strong disapproval and firm opposition” of their commemoration of the anniversary. Amid heavy police presence in the city on June 4, six people were arrested for allegedly inciting others to participate in an unauthorized assembly (*AsiaNews* June 2,4; *BBC* June 6,7; *South China Morning Post* May 31). *kf*

July 1, 2022:

## Hong Kong’s Chief Executive John Lee is inaugurated

On the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong’s handover to the People’s Republic of China, the new head of government of the Chinese Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was inaugurated. Former Sec-

retary of Security John Lee Ka-chiu takes over from Carrie Lam, who has been Chief Executive since July 1, 2017. She was not seeking a second term. “The 64-year-old Lee is considered a political hardliner and is notorious for his absolute loyalty to the Chinese central government,” according to the May 8 *Tagesschau*. In the sham democratic election, there was only one candidate, more than 99 percent of the approximately 1,500 members of the Election Committee voted for Lee.

China’s President Xi Jinping traveled to the 25th anniversary celebrations and Lee’s inauguration. During Xi’s two-day visit, massive police forces were deployed, entire neighborhoods cordoned off, and domestic and foreign media coverage severely curtailed. In his speech, Xi said Hong Kong’s “true democracy” began with its return to China in 1997. But only “patriots” should rule Hong Kong. – Like Carrie Lam, John Lee is also a member of the Catholic Church. His philosophy of life is “helping society as a whole,” the *South China Morning Post* quotes him from a press conference (*AsiaNews* July 1; *Tagesschau* May 8; *South China Morning Post* May 3; *Süddeutsche Zeitung* May 8). *kf*

July 5, 2022:

## **Reuters reports: Unofficial representative of the Holy See warns Catholic missions in Hong Kong of difficult times ahead**

According to a *Reuters* report on July 5, 2022, Monsignor Javier Herrera Corona, the Holy See’s unofficial representative in Hong Kong, has met four times with the approximately 50 Catholic missions in Hong Kong to warn them of China’s tightening control over the city. Msgr. Herrera Corona was head of the Vatican’s China Study Mission in Hong Kong until March of this year and was given a new assignment as Apostolic Nuncio to the Republic of Congo and Gabon. He had led the study mission for six years. The meetings took place from October last year, according to *Reuters*. Herrera Corona urged the missionaries to prepare for tougher times as China tightened control over the city. He urged that property, files and funds be adequately protected. *Reuters* relies on statements by four people who are familiar with the private meetings but declined to be named. Hong Kong is no longer the great beach-head it once was, said Monsignor Herrera Corona. The monsignor also warned the participants of the meeting that the rights of religious institutions outlined in Hong Kong’s Basic Law could not be relied upon in the face of increasing pressure from Beijing, according to the anonymous sources. The congregations should be prepared for possible curbs on long-standing programs, such as foreign missionaries serving as parish priests in local churches, the contacts said.

According to the report, as early as 2019, before the 2020 National Security Law came into force, the Study Mission itself had discreetly shipped out archival materials, as “they feared their mission was under close scrutiny by China’s state security apparatus.” Three religious orders also took their documents out of the country after Monsignor Herrera Corona’s warnings.

According to the official directory of the diocese, there are currently around 50 Catholic missionary societies and religious orders in Hong Kong with over 600 priests, brothers and sisters (*Reuters* July 5). *kf*

## **Singapore**

May 29, 2022:

## **Archbishop William Goh nominated cardinal**

Pope Francis has announced a consistory for August 27, 2022, at which he will create 21 new cardinals. Among them is William Goh Seng Chye, Archbishop of Singapore. Born in Singapore on June 25, 1957, he is only the second native bishop of the diocese. He has been Archbishop of Singapore since 2013.

Of the 5.6 million inhabitants of Singapore, 300,000 are Catholics. The proportion of Christians has increased from 12.7% of the population in 1990 to 19% in 2015. Singapore's Catholics, mostly of Chinese and Indian descent, increased from 4% in 1990 to 5.35% in 2015 (*UCAN* May 30; *Vatican News* May 29). *kf*

### Authors' Abbreviations:

*kf*: Katharina Feith

*kwt*: Katharina Wenzel-Teuber

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## Lu Bohong, the “Forgotten Saint” of Shanghai

Leopold Leeb

Translated by Jacqueline Mulberge SSpS



Lu Bohong in 1917.

Photo: taken from Zhao Jianmin, *Tianzhujiào zài Huá shìhuà*, p. 496, by kind permission of Zhao Jianmin.

Whoever is Lu Bohong? In 1938 one would have been more likely to know the answer than today, because the Catholic entrepreneur and active “apostle of charity” was internationally known; in fact alongside Ma Xiangbo (1840–1939), Joseph Lu Bohong (1875–1937) was probably the best known Chinese Catholic of his times, but due to the war with Japan (1937–1945), the civil war (1945–1949) and subsequent developments (Communist power take-over) he sank into oblivion.

### Family

His name Lu Bohong 陆伯鸿 was earlier on also written as Loh Pa Hung or Loh Pa-hung. He came from a traditional Catholic family. The first Christian in the Lu family

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The original German version of this article entitled “Lu Bohong, der ‘vergessene Heilige’ von Shanghai” will appear in one of the next issues of *China heute*.

was supposedly already baptized in the time of Xu Guangui (1562–1633), that is shortly after 1600. However, more precise information on the genealogy of the Lu family, which probably came to Shanghai from Henan in the 18th century, can only be traced back to about 1850, when Lu Songyuan (ca. 1810–1880), the grandfather of Lu Bohong, actively supported the emerging mission in Shanghai. In 1875 little Joseph Lu Bohong was born in Dongjiadu parish in the south-eastern area of the old city of Shanghai. As the only boy in the family, he was lovingly brought up by his mother and his two sisters. He witnessed the rapid growth of the city of Shanghai, which between 1840 and 1940 became not only the largest but also the most modern and wealthiest city in China, and also the largest centre of Christianity with many schools, publishing houses and hospitals. However, the great divide between the very rich and the poor slum dwellers was also particularly visible in the metropolis; there were many beggars, street children and refugees, but also epidemics, drug-related crime and prostitution.

The increasing modernization of Shanghai was facilitated also by a group of local businessmen, the so-called *compradores* (*maiban jieji* 买办阶级), who are often portrayed in communist historiography as henchmen of the imperialist powers. Shanghai's Catholics, some of whom had close contact with the French (Jesuit) missionaries, were almost predestined to take on a role as mediators between the foreign entrepreneurs and investors and the local workers and immigrants. The Lu family was among these successful Catholic families who worked with the foreign entrepreneurs in trade, industry, administration and banking. Lu Bohong could probably also simply be portrayed as one of many successful businessmen who was able to carry out large projects through his contacts with the mission procurators in Shanghai. But he was a capitalist in the best sense: he used his talents and resources masterfully and in the long term for non-profit ventures: for the relief of the poor.

## Youthful Ambitions, Marriage and Children

Lu Bohong grew up in the vicinity of the well-known church of Dongjiadu (which was also the cathedral until the 1950's), and from his childhood enjoyed the music and decoration of the great church during the magnificent liturgical celebrations of his times. In his youth he wanted to pursue a career as a civil servant. At the age of 20, however, he did not get any further with the Confucian examinations and began to learn French privately from a Shanghai Jesuit (Fr. Simon Gong Chai, 1850–1914). That Jesuit priest made attendance at daily Mass a condition for the language lessons and so Lu also learnt some Latin. Gradually, the notoriously proud and opinionated young man became a spiritual person who prayed a lot and was also active as a catechist in the suburbs of Shanghai. Daily attendance at the early Mass, where Joseph Lu assisted the priest with the Latin prayer responses, became a seldom missed custom. He married in 1896 and had three sons with his first wife who, however, died in 1905. In 1900 his son Lu Yingeng (1900–1980) was born, and who in the 1940's tried to continue his father's charitable projects, but emigrated to the USA in 1949. Around 1900 Lu Bohong worked as secretary and translator for a French lawyer



Photo taken in 1921, before the birth of Lu Bohong's sixth son Lu Zengli.

In front, from left: Lu Zengzuo, Lu Bohong's sister, his wife Zhu Yana with the third daughter in her arms (she died as a child), Lu Deying, Lu Bohong, Lu Bohong's sister, Lu Bohong's eldest sister and Lu Weidu.

Second row, from left: Lu Naying, wife of Lu Zengxi, Lu Yingeng, Lu Zengqi and Lu Zengxi.

Photo: taken from Bruno Hagspiel, *Along the Mission Trail, 4, China*, Techny 1927, photo page between p. 4 and 5.

in the French Concession in Shanghai. Thus he learned legal structures and accuracy in administrative matters.

The year 1905 brought not only the death of his first wife but also a serious illness which the thirty-year-old Lu almost did not survive. In a vision he saw the Mother of God and after his recovery he dedicated himself all the more to his work in one of the prayer and catechesis groups that were organised in the parish. These prayer groups were similar to the Legion of Mary (which only came to China in 1940) and focused on “good works,” e.g. visiting the sick, helping the poor and missionary work in the suburbs of Shanghai. It becomes clear that this “going to the needy” shaped Lu Bohong's life, for in the remaining three decades of his life he made countless such visits almost daily: to hospitals, old people's homes, suburban parishes, but above all to poor neighbourhoods. He was a real “activist,” constantly on the move, whether on foot, in a rickshaw, by train or (later) in his own car. His visits to prisons became almost legendary, where he tried to convert and baptize especially the inmates sentenced to death before their execution, in order to at least save their souls.

In 1909, he married his second wife, Zhu Yana (1891–1973), who faithfully accompanied him and with whom he had five children, including Michael Lu Weidu 陆微读 (1913–2010), who held influential positions in the Shanghai Patriotic Association from 1955 on (a circumstance which, unfortunately, must have subsequently damaged Lu Bohong's reputation in certain underground Church circles).

## Successful Entrepreneur and Founder of Charitable Institutions

The milestone as an entrepreneur in his own right came in 1911 when the Chinese municipal government put Lu Bohong in charge of the electricity plant. The rapidly growing popularity of lightbulbs in Shanghai meant that Lu could expand quickly and already two years later he took on the building and administration of a streetcar line in the part of Shanghai that lies to the south of the old city and the French Concession. Lu Bohong's large projects (electricity plant, streetcar line, later also waterworks) became quite important for the infrastructure of that zone. Together with the wealth Lu also had the possibility to realize his long held dream project: a large hospice for the poor! So often, on his visits to the suburban slums, he had met helpless existences, people in need of bread, medicine, a home and care, and he could not help. Now, however, the city administration decided to restore an extremely run-down poorhouse in the southern city, the Puyutang 普育堂. This project, known as the “New Puyutang” (Xin Puyutang), in Western sources called “St. Joseph's Hospice,” became the life's work of the young entrepreneur. He planned the large-scale new building as a kind of model institution, modern, clean and healthy, a home for the poorest of the poor, regardless of whether they were orphaned, old, wasting away or mentally ill. For the construction, Lu Bohong secured the bricks of the old city wall of Shanghai, which was torn down in those years. He entrusted the care of the residents to the Vincentian Sisters and soon after the opening in 1913, there were several hundred living in the home. Later the resident community grew to around two to three thousand, which was naturally a constant financial burden for Lu, who often had to depend on donations to buy rice for his protégés. The residents were divided according to their needs: here the orphan children, there the elderly and the bedbound. There were workshops, a section for the mentally ill and a large chapel. So Lu had created a “City of the Poor,” similar to that of St. Joseph Cottolengo (1786–1842) in Turin a hundred years earlier.

Known as an efficient organiser and generous donor, Lu Bohong received requests from many sides to support Catholic charitable institutions. Thus in 1914 he financed the Franciscan Sisters' clinic for the poor in Yangshupu, a different part of Shanghai city. In the following years, he contributed to half a dozen Catholic clinics and hospitals in the Shanghai area. In 1918 Joseph Lu was significantly involved in the founding of the “Central Hospital” in Beijing. This was the first modern (i.e. “Western-organized”) hospital founded by Chinese people themselves. All the former hospitals in China had been founded and financed by missionaries. Admittedly, the “Central Hospital” was also dependent on the service of the French Vincentian Sisters, because at that time there were hardly any well-trained Chinese nurses at all.

Lu Bohong had no academic qualifications but he was ahead of his times, because he had an eye for the practical needs of his fellow human beings and was always ready to provide active help. After the outbreak of the “plague” (Spanish flu) in 1919, he opened an “isolation hospital” for infected people in a suburb of Shanghai, also the first of its kind in China. Then in 1933 he founded China's first, large psychiatric hospital, the “Mercy Hospital for Nervous Diseases,” also in a suburb in the south of Shanghai.

In 1924 Lu Bohong invested in a transport business, the Datong Shipping Company. At the National Synod that took place in Shanghai in May 1924, Lu Bohong was an im-



Around the year 1925: Lu Bohong (left) visiting a prison and trying to convert and baptize a prisoner before his execution. Photo: taken from the illustrated book by Shi Jianhua and Lu Qin'an *Hanren de ai* 含忍的爱, p. 38.

portant personality; he helped cater for the many bishops and priests and also organised a banquet at which Shanghai politicians and influential persons could meet the prelates of the Catholic Church.

### A “Saint” during Life, but “Persona Non Grata” after Death?

During his lifetime Lu Bohong was regarded as a “second Vincent de Paul.” With his life-long friend, the Catholic entrepreneur Zhu Zhiyao 朱志尧 (1863–1955), Lu was one of the founding fathers of the Catholic Action in Shanghai (1913) and became its president. He took care of the missionaries who needed help, e.g. newcomers in Shanghai. The missionaries of Steyl owe him special thanks because, when the German missionaries were driven out of the mission areas after the war, he lodged a group of 14 Steyl members in his hospice in Shanghai, giving them a home before their departure. During the harsh years after the war (after 1918) Lu also sent money to Europe. Thus bishops in Hungary and Germany received financial donations from him for the support of poor children and religious houses. Bishop Augustin Henninghaus, SVD (1862–1939) had good connections with Lu Bohong and also requested a donation from him when the Yellow River flooded large areas of Shandong in 1921.

When Lu Bohong was a member of a Shanghai delegation at a trade congress in Seattle, USA, in 1925, he took the opportunity to invite the Jesuits in California to establish a school for English education in Shanghai. Such an arbitrary course of action certainly did not garner the applause of the French Jesuits in Shanghai, some of whom resisted the

“encroachment” of the English language. However, Lu Bohong was used to putting his plans into action. In the summer of 1926 he travelled to Rome in that cause and gained an audience with the Pope, who then suggested to the Jesuit General that he enlist American Jesuits to establish a school of English in Shanghai. (Fr. Pius Moore was able to open Gonzaga College for the teaching of English in Shanghai in 1931.)

Lu Bohong, who struggled considerably to learn French as a young man, was no academic but he had excellent connections with the French in Shanghai and was presented with several honorary awards and decorations by France and Belgium. Joseph Lu also learned English. He even tried, as mentioned above, to gain Catholic missionaries to teach English. He was a citizen of the world, a cosmopolitan. In 1936 he was honoured with the Order “Papal Chamberlain of the Sword and Cape” (Cameriere segreto di Cappa e Spada). In February 1937, he was one of the outstanding representatives of China at the International Eucharistic Congress in Manila. That was perhaps the highpoint of his career, because in that same year Shanghai suffered the catastrophe that left his life’s work almost in ruins and in the end also cost him his life. From September 1937 on, Japanese bombs fell on the suburbs and settlements inhabited by Chinese, while the foreign settlement areas (the so-called “Foreign Concessions”) remained unharmed.

Many of the upper class fled the city at the time, a relatively easy matter. Lu Bohong also faced the question whether it would not be better to take the boat to Hong Kong, but it seems that Bishop Auguste Haouissée, SJ (1877–1948) advised him to stay in the city. If Lu Bohong had been a European, he would certainly have been involved in a similar way as the “father of the refugees” Fr. Robert Jacquinet de Bésange, SJ (1878–1946), who is known to have organised a safe zone for refugees near the French Concession through diplomatic contacts. The problem was that after the occupation of the city, the Japanese tried to establish a city government that would include respected Chinese, but the Kuomintang (KMT) government, which had by then been expelled from its seat in Nanjing (Nanjing Massacre: December 1937), forbade any cooperation with the enemy occupiers. That was the situation on December 30, 1937, when Lu Bohong left his refuge in the French Concession, accompanied by his son. He was already in his car when “a man selling oranges” approached and asked him to buy oranges. Suddenly, however, the man drew a pistol and fired several times on Lu who died of his wounds barely an hour later. The assassin ran off and no one confessed to the crime. How was it possible that the universally loved and respected man, the “beggar king of Shanghai,” became the victim of an assassination? The general answer, fed by rumours, was as follows: “He was a collaborator with the Japanese and therefore KMT patriots got rid of him.” That was never confirmed, however, and the family suffered greatly from the KMT’s failure to make an official statement. So, unfortunately, Lu Bohong in common parlance became a *hanjian* 汉奸 (collaborator of Japan), although there was and is no evidence of Lu collaborating with the Japanese occupiers. In China, however, the *hanjian* are reviled, and so the “Saint of Shanghai” became a “persona non grata” after his death.

Naturally the events of the war and the power takeover by the Communists in 1949 were further challenges for the family of Lu Bohong. The new situation blurred and ob-

scured the previous achievements of the social apostle. He quickly fell into oblivion. It was better not to mention him and his many contacts with the missionaries at all anymore.

The Jesuit priest and mission historian Joseph Masson (1908–1998) travelled to Shanghai after the second World War to search for material for a biography of Lu. In 1950, he published the then most detailed study on Lu, entitled: *Un millionnaire chinois au service des gueux. Joseph Lo Pa Hong. Shanghai 1875–1937* (A Chinese millionaire at the service of the poor. Joseph Lo Pa Hong. Shanghai 1875–1937), Tournai – Paris: Casterman. Shortly after the murder of Lu Bohong, a German brochure of just under 30 pages was also published, namely the booklet by Johannes Thauern, SVD *Lo Pa Hong, der katholische Mann. Ein Vorbild und Mahner* (Lo Pa Hong, the Catholic Man. A Role Model and Admonisher), Mödling: St. Gabriel Verlag 1938.

Lu Bohong’s son Lu Weidu cooperated from 1955 on with the official Church (Patriotic Association) in Shanghai and thus Lu Bohong’s prestige was to a certain extent used by the newly powerful for their own legitimation. Lu Weidu’s son Lu Qin’an 陆钦安, born in 1940, also accepted from Bishop Fu Tieshan the position as secretary in the Patriotic Association in Beijing in 1985. In 2019 I was able to meet this Mr. Lu Qin’an and I have him to thank for all the information about his famous grandfather. The most important thing that he urgently wanted to tell me during our first meeting, was that the mystery about who was responsible for the assassination had at last been revealed, after 80 years! In 2014 a historian, Mr. Sun Xiaoxiao, published a book in which the names of the seven assassins are listed: they were men of the KMT army intelligence service (*juntong* 军统). They were responsible for the murder of a whole series of collaborators in Shanghai in the spring of 1938, the first of whom was Lu Bohong. He had been eliminated “as a precaution,” so to speak, because there was no evidence that he had collaborated with the Japanese.

Relieved, Lu Qin’an leaned back on the sofa in his flat: “Finally, after so long and so many rumours, we know who killed my grandfather. We also know that he was not a collaborator.” I believe we both thought the same thing at that moment: Actually one could restore his name and his honour. But how? And his grave? “Oh, that was looted during the Cultural Revolution. The Red Guards also found his medals in the coffin and stole them or threw them into the water,” says Lu Qin’an with a sigh.

Lu Bohong’s colourful and so committed life naturally lends itself to a film, and as his grandson Lu Qin’an told me, there was a Hong Kong film producer years ago who was keen to make a film about Lu Bohong. “But I didn’t agree,” Lu Qin’an said. “Why not?” I asked.

*That would surely have been a film in which my grandfather would have been portrayed together with the Shanghai clique of rich entrepreneurs of the time, with the mafia, the underworld, with the opium dealers and brothel owners. I did not want that.*

Then for me as an Austrian he had a surprise. He said:

*You know, after the first war there was an Austrian noblewoman or countess who decided to work as a nun in the mission, and she really wanted to do her service in*

*the Lu Bohong poorhouse in Shanghai. Have you heard about her? Do you know the name of that princess?*

I have tried to find something out and came across the name “Mère Carla Helene, formerly Countess Ida von Eltz from Vienna,” but that was all. Perhaps historians in Austria (or Germany, because the von Eltz family comes from Germany) could reconstruct the life of this Countess who spent her life at the service of the poor in Shanghai.

For me, the acquaintance with Lu Qin’an, the now 82-year-old grandson of Lu Bohong, was a call to reconstruct his grandfather’s life, if possible, as a role model of a socially committed modern Christian and Catholic. It became a spiritual experience and I sometimes see Lu Bohong before me, visiting the sick and taking slum dweller beggars to his hospice. Or as he kneels before a statue of St. Joseph and prays for a “miracle.” (It reportedly happened at least twice that the St. Joseph’s Hospice ran out of rice, but in response to prayers, generous donors suddenly arrived.) Lu Bohong was a man who in many respects can serve as a role model. I do believe that if there had not been that assassination, he might perhaps already have been beatified. In China, where most of the local saints are martyrs from the Boxer era, the role model of this “modern saint” would be doubly important. Lu could be someone who inspires charitable work in today’s circumstances.

And in the future? Will he be newly discovered in China? An appreciation of the Church’s social work in the period before 1949 would be urgently needed, but that would require an opening of the Communist view of history, and unfortunately that opening does not seem to be in view yet today. *Quo usque tandem?* Is this awesome social apostle to be forgotten for ever? For even though a “Civil Administration Museum” (Minzheng bowuguan 民政博物馆) was opened in 2012 in one of the buildings of the former “St. Joseph’s Hospice” and Lu Bohong’s charitable work is documented to some extent (e.g. with names and photos of orphans who were taken in at the time), there is still no adequate biographical representation of Lu Bohong in China to this day. There is not a single book about him and he is practically unknown among the Catholics of China today! The illustrated book entitled *Hanren de ai 含忍的爱* (Compassionate Love), that Lu Qin’an produced with his friend Shi Jianhua in 2021, does contain many old photos, but with twenty xeroxed copies, it is only intended for internal use. ... Thus, my forthcoming book *Shanghai’s Forgotten Apostle of Charity Joseph Lu Bohong*, to be published by Projekt Verlag, is the only updated biography of that meritorious Catholic.

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## Book Review of:

**Chan Shun-hing – Jonathan W. Johnson, *Citizens of Two Kingdoms. Civil Society and Christian Religion in Greater China*, Religion in Chinese Societies Vol. 17, Leiden – Boston: Brill 2021, xi, 316 pp. Introduction, Diagrams, Tables, Index. ISBN 978-90-04-45933-5 (HB) · ISSN 1877-6264**

*Michael Kropp*  
*Translated by Jacqueline Mulberge SSps*

This publication is interesting to read and can be recommended. The volume, edited by Chan Shun-hing and Jonathan W. Johnson, brings articles on the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China on Taiwan, and Hong Kong and Macao, which date back to a conference in December 2016, organised by the Centre for Sino-Christian Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University, and which have been updated again for publication in 2021.

The question that the various authors explore is the relationship of religion – in particular the Protestant and Catholic Churches and Christian organisations – to the State, government and Party, and what part the Christian religion plays in the development and extent of civil society in the geographical, ethnic and cultural region of “Greater China,” which includes the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Macao and the Republic of China on Taiwan.

The major space is taken up by the discussion of the situation in the People's Republic of China, framed by an introductory and concluding article, followed by three articles on Hong Kong and one article each on the situation in Taiwan and Macao.

None of the authors is based in the People's Republic of China. Similarly, unfortunately no mainland Chinese Catholic social services at diocesan level, such as the Catholic Social Service Centre in Xi'an, are listed, as is so often the case in corresponding publications (see also the book review on Levy – Pissler, *Charity with Chinese Characteristics. Chinese Charitable Foundations between the Party-State and Society*, in: *China heute* 2021, No. 3, pp. 184-187). Benevolently, the reviewer supposes that these omissions are deliberate acts of restraint and political prudence on the part of the authors and are not due to ignorance or perceived marginal importance of the institutions.

Nevertheless, the reading remains intriguing, as the authors raise a number of questions that open up the reader's view when considering the two “kingdoms” – whereby this dichotomy can be used in a latently ambiguous way and can initially refer to the rela-

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tionship between religion/Church and State/Party, but also to the relationship of (secular) civil society to the Christian Churches, as well as specifically, with regard to the Catholic Church, to the tense relationship between the Chinese state leader and the Pope as head of the Catholic Church.

Thus in addition to the obligatory definition of “civil” and civil society, Chan and Johnson already formulate essential challenges in the introduction: On the one hand, the observation that with civil society a concept that originated in the West was transferred to a non-Western context, and on the other hand, that of the double identity consisting of Christian religious affiliation and the associated “heavenly” bond as well as the “earthly” life as a citizen and subject in the People’s Republic of China.

Throughout the discussions, the question is posed as to what role Christianity, in its various forms, has played and continues to play in the societies of the different “Chinas”: that of the mainland, that of Hong Kong and Macao, and that of Taiwan.

The diversity of the different “Christianities” in the cultural, political and social areas of Greater China is stressed time and again. The authors discuss which manifestations of civil society correspond with the different Christian variants – for example, in Madsen, the liberal, the republican (i.e. based on common core values of a society and linked by common goals) and the corporate, the latter with potential for totalitarianism. Madsen sees the liberal and republican form of civil society represented in Hong Kong and Taiwan, while he assigns the corporate form to the Mainland social mosaic.

Above all, the most topical question is also raised again and again: How do civil society and Christianity interact with the agenda of the current state leader Xi Jinping?

Christianity in China has many variations. Madsen highlights the differences between Christians in northern China and Christians – Protestant and Catholic – in southern China, especially in the southern Chinese city of Wenzhou. There he sees economic prosperity united with the Christian faith. This local economic potential – manifested in terms such as the “Jerusalem of China” for Wenzhou or the “Boss Christianity” – cared little for State directives in the past, so that a more liberal civil society with Chinese characteristics was able to emerge here.

Madsen also points out that being a Christian is still shaped by a transcendent reality, a reality that poses a potential threat to any “earthly system,” social as well as political. Therefore, no secular power can fully count on the loyalty of Christian believers. The history of Christianity has shown time and again that any kind of martyrdom is understood as a testimony of faith, especially in times of reprisals and attempts to eradicate Christian faith.

Some of the research (such as Hao Zhidong) focuses on showing in the individual Chinese regions of “Greater China”

- what degree of organisational, communication and cooperation structures the Christian Churches have,
- in which political and legal framework they can act,
- which values they live and are able to live and
- what influence they have on civil social activities, or
- what impact they have in terms of social services.

In the view of all the authors, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao show only marginal differences in the ranking of civil society activity in terms of political framework conditions and organisational structures. On the other hand, the scope for action of the Christian Churches and other civil society organisations in Mainland China has been decreasing since 2012 at the latest, and even more so as a result of new regulations in 2016/2017.

However, in the meantime, even in the administrative zones of Hong Kong and Macao, Beijing's recent influence has increasingly restricted the freedoms of civil society and religious activities, especially those of the Christian Churches. This is particularly true of Hong Kong and its active democratic movements and those linked to the Christian Churches, which, in disregard of all existing treaty arrangements, are now much more closely monitored by Beijing's security forces than they were a few years ago.

In terms of civil society activism and the resulting impact, Hong Kong and Taiwan appear to be the strongest, followed by Mainland China (examples cited are Wenzhou and Shanghai – where the at that time consecrated Bishop Ma Daqin publicly announced his resignation from the Patriotic Association), while the Church in Macao is probably the least active, here actually only through initiatives by individual Christians.

With regard to values such as human dignity, social justice, equality, human rights, gender freedom, tolerance, poverty reduction, democratic ideas (with the exception of the appointment of church leaders) – as can be seen from the volume under review – the Churches in the four regions studied are in no way inferior to each other. There are hardly any differences to be found here. The Chinese Christian Churches uphold these values, even if they differ in their effectiveness due to the very different political framework conditions, especially between the People's Republic of China on the one hand and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan on the other.

This is especially true when we look at social services and educational institutions. Here Hong Kong (the largest organisation is Caritas), Taiwan (Christian universities) and Macao are much better placed than Mainland China, especially if one compares the number of church institutions on the Mainland today with the time before 1949. The Churches' limited room for manoeuvre, controlled and partly suppressed by the Party and the State, has a very negative effect on the services.

In general, all the authors mention only very few Christian organisations by name, such as Caritas Hong Kong, the Amity Foundation with a Protestant background in Nanjing or the Catholic aid organisation Jinde Charities in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province. The growing number of diocesan Catholic social welfare offices in Mainland China is unfortunately not mentioned at all. A weakness that pervades all the accounts.

Moreover, the individual analyses of Mainland China are limited to the urban part; reference is made almost exclusively to Wenzhou and Shanghai. Some authors explicitly point to this low data coverage and thus view the conclusions with some reservation.

In addition, the rural situation and the activities located there go completely unmentioned, which does not do justice to the Catholic situation in particular, since the majority of Catholic Christians are located in the countryside.

It would certainly also have been interesting to take a closer look at the contribution of Western organisations in terms of finance and personnel in building civil society, as well

as the Christian organisations in China mentioned above. Perhaps some of the inherent intentions of Western support could have contributed to a better understanding of the role and significant orientation of the Chinese institutions that were built up.

Perhaps the most significant question for the foreseeable future of Mainland China in particular, which is discussed again and again in the volume, is the relationship of Christians, Churches and civil society in general to control, restrictions and repression in the People's Republic of China, which have increasingly arisen since the beginning of the authoritarian government of President Xi Jinping. Christians are being more and more characterised as a threat to politics and increasingly faced with the choice of being a good citizen (or subject?) of the State/Party or living their faith as a good Christian. For the authoress Teresa Wright, for example, is the choice clear: the Christian will choose the faith. In doing so, she leaves open (or only latently hints at) what the reaction of the faithful would be should there be further restrictions on the practice of faith or even persecution in the future and thus the already fragile balancing act between good Christians on the one hand and obedient citizens on the other finally be overstretched.

All the authors agree that there are many shades between these two behavioural options, which can show a high degree of variation locally and regionally, since the social, cultural and ethnic spaces in which they are lived are often very different and the respective space of action, which is determined by local representatives of Party and State and their attitude to religion and civil society, can be very different in China.

For better understanding, the reviewer notes here that the Party and the State have never abandoned their fundamental attitude towards religion: the primacy of the Party and the State over religions, religious groups and their activities has always been maintained. Rooted in the tradition of the Chinese Empire, a continuity in policy and practice can be identified for Mainland China on the post-cultural revolutionary timeline, ranging from Document 19 in 1982 to the new legislations for religious, social and civil society groups and their activities in 2016–2018. While from the 1990s until around 2008 the situation in the People's Republic of China was characterised by a certain liberalism, the scope of the “third sector” was then gradually restricted, only to be fundamentally curtailed, controlled and repressed from 2011/2012 onwards with the emerging power of Xi Jinping's government. This currently peaks in particular in the suppression of religious education for future generations, i.e. children, adolescents and young adults, and in the Sinicization of religions that is required and increasingly implemented, and which especially and in particular aims at Christianity, which is still tainted with foreign infiltration.

Apart from the special situation on Taiwan resp. the Republic of China, it is true for all “Chinas,” i.e. for the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao, that the government of the People's Republic of China has taken control of civil society and religion in recent years and is increasingly shaping the actions of the citizens/subordinates according to its own ideas. In all the articles in this volume, we see time and again the mental balancing act to which the individual Chinese inhabitants are subjected in order to shape their lives in such a way that they are both good citizens and good Christians, alongside the legal regulations, the religious rules, the prohibitions and commandments. How long this state of affairs can

be sustained must remain open, as must the question of what political and social consequences the future will bring should the scales tilt in one direction or the other.

In conclusion, a few formal comments: The volume was published by the Brill Publishing House, based in Leiden, Netherlands, as No. 17 in the series “Religion in Chinese Societies,” edited by Kenneth Dean (National University of Singapore), Richard Madsen (University of California, San Diego) and David Palmer (University of Hong Kong). The volume is available both as hard back and as an e-book.

The structure of the volume is clearly arranged. The table of contents, which assigns the articles to the regions of Greater China in five parts, is supplemented by graphs/tables and a list of abbreviations.

At the beginning, the authors are introduced with their respective research bases and main focus of work.

For the interested reader there is a very helpful list of corresponding reference literature at the end of each article.

The index is supplemented by a small number of Chinese technical terms in Chinese characters. A separate and more comprehensive index of Chinese terms would perhaps also have been desirable.

As already emphasised at the beginning, the publication deserves the full attention of those interested in learning more about Christianity, the Church and civil society and their respective lived relationship to Party and State in today’s political, cultural and social landscape of Greater China with the People’s Republic in Mainland China, the administrative zones of Hong Kong and Macao, and the Republic of China on Taiwan. It is highly recommended reading.

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